

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 IO-10 /081 W

----- 129952

R 170300Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5269

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5645

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LA

SUBJ: CALL ON SOVIET CHARGE D'AFFAIRES

1. MADE COURTESY CALL SEPTEMBER 12 ON SOVIET CHARGE
YOURI CHMANEVSKI WHO WAS FRIENDLY AND TALKATIVE BUT
WHO CAME THROUGH AS ALMOST A CARICATURE OF A SOVIET
DIPLOMAT WITH HIS MIXTURE OF PEASANT BONHOMIE AND
PONDEROUS EXPRESSIONS OF OPINION ON JUST ABOUT EVERY-
THING THAT CAME UP, E.G.:

2. U.S.-SOVIET CONTACTS IN VIENTIANE. CHMANEVSKI
SAID HE HOPED TO MAINTAIN THE SAME FRIENDLY ASSOCIATION
HE HAD ENJOYED WITH MY PREDECESSOR AND REMINISCED
ABOUT HIS WORLD WAR II SERVICE WHICH HE SAID HE STARTED
AS AN ELEVEN YEAR OLD DECKHAND ON A TUGBOAT CONVERTED
TO A MINESWEEPER OPERATING OUT OF ARCHANGEL. HE FELT
THAT RELATIONS WERE A LOT EASIER IN THOSE DAYS BETWEEN
PEOPLE ASSOCIATED IN WORLD WAR II. HE WAS DEPARTING
FOR TWO MONTHS' HOME LEAVE IN A DAY OR TWO.

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3. THE CHINESE. CHINESE-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS IN BANGKOK PROMPTED BY PEKING WERE PLANTING STORIES EXAGGERATING THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN LAOS. AS OF SEPTEMBER 12 THERE WERE ONLY 132 SOVIET MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN LAOS. (THE FIGURE IS AT LEAST 500 AND VERY POSSIBLY HIGHER, ACCORDING TO OUR BEST ESTIMATES.) THE CHINESE WERE NO LONGER COMMUNIST IN OUTLOOK BUT EXPANSIONIST, AND THEIR ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN LAOS AIMED TO JOIN THE THAI ROAD NETWORK WOULD EVENTUALLY ENABLE THEM TO TRAVEL IN TANKS ALL THE WAY TO SINGAPORE.

4. THE PGNU. THE PATHET LAO WERE REVOLUTIONARIES WHO LACKED EXPERIENCE IN MANY THINGS AND WERE LEARNING BY DOING. IT HAD TO BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THINGS HAD CHANGED AND A NEW SYSTEM WAS BEING SET UP HERE. THEY REMEMBERED THE U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE INDOCHINE WAR AND THE U.S. HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO BIND UP THE WOUNDS OF WAR. I TOLD HIM, AS I TELL EVERYONE ELSE WHO ADVANCES THIS LINE, THAT A LOT OF THINGS HAD HAPPENED SINCE THE PARIS ACCORDS INCLUDING THE MAJOR NORTH VIETNAMESE DEPLOYMENT INTO SOUTH VIET-NAM. HE SAID THIS WAS OF NO IMPORTANCE SINCE THE UNIFICATION OF VIET-NAM WAS INEVITABLE, AND I SUGGESTED THE PGNU WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO STOP PUSHING THE PARIS ACCORDS/WOUNDS OF WAR LINE. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION OF FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HERE, CHMANEVSKI SAID THE DRV WOULD HAVE TO OPEN BROAD COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN LAOS AND THE SEA AND THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE BECAUSE OF THE TERRAIN.

5. CAMBODIA. HE HAD SERVED IN CAMBODIA FOR YEARS AND FELT THERE WAS REALLY NO PLACE FOR SIHANOUK THERE NOW DESPITE HIS RECENT RETURN. HE ALSO SAID JOKINGLY THAT SIHANOUK WAS QUITE CAPABLE OF PROCLAIMING HIMSELF SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CAMBODIAN COMMUNIST PARTY BUT NO ONE WOULD TAKE THAT SERIOUSLY BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN FEW PEOPLE AS ANTI-COMMUNIST AS SIHANOUK. HE ALSO THOUGHT THE CHINESE WERE INTERESTED IN STIRRING UP TROUBLE IN CAMBODIA BUT WOULD BE HAMPERED BY THE DISPERSAL OF THE PHNOM PENH

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ETHNIC CHINESE COMMUNITY WHICH HAD BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF THE CITY ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE IN THE INITIAL FORCED EVACUATION.

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